

Porter Valley News



The newsletter of Friends of the Porter Valley - Registered Charity No. 1069865

Issue 93

April 2019

Early Sheffield Silversmiths

A talk by Emma Paragreen

Wednesday 1st May

7:30 - 9:30pm

Bents Green Methodist Church

Ringinglow Road



Before the talk we will have our Open Meeting.
After the talk, tea and biscuits, and a chance to chat with the committee and other members.

Forge Dam

Following meetings with the SCC Ecology unit the ecological management plan is being developed. It has been agreed that the de-silting will be carried out, where possible, to a minimum depth of 2m to discourage re-growth of reeds. An existing area of reeds at the north-east corner of the pond will be reduced and kept to help absorb a local discharge of ochrous water. The island will be reduced in size and location altered to minimise the possibility of access by people, dogs and foxes and thus prevent disturbance to nesting/roosting birds. Furthermore the island will be kidney shaped to allow controlled reed growth inside the concave shore of the island. The island will be formed with gently sloping banks to enable access for wildlife.

The training wall will be built to be porous to allow water levels on either side to be equal. The top of the wall will be planted with vegetation to minimise visual impact and have barriers to prevent un-authorised access.

As there have been water voles on the site in the past it is hoped that the changes will help to allow a re-population, even if that means re-introduction. To this end work beyond the pond itself will be necessary to enable creation of a suitable habitat. The area of wet woodland to the west of the pond is suitably secluded and could be fenced by the Brook to discourage access by dogs. Water voles need meadows for feeding and to provide this, the areas designated for silt processing will be reinstated as meadow land at the end of the contractor's activity.

The strategic location of the site as mentioned above also makes the area suitable to encourage the nesting of Willow Tits as they are already around in the upper Sheaf and Rivelin valleys. The wet woodland area is most suitable for habitat improvement which can be carried out by the volunteer workforce of Friends of the Porter Valley.

David Young



Shepherd Wheel

All is flowing and working well at Shepherd Wheel, although one weekend the water wheel was so iced up it was inoperable. A notice board has been placed by the dam to ask people not to let their dogs in the water, to protect the bank from erosion and the liner from damage. Engineer Keith is about to have a replacement knee operation in April - we wish him the best of luck and hope to see him back after a speedy recovery.

Maggie Marsh

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The Endcliffe Park Flypast to Commemorate the American Sacrifice in 1944



Well what an amazing event in Endcliffe Park on 22nd February – just look at the photos from some of our Facebook members and the films on YouTube.

It was the 75th anniversary of the heroic sacrifice by 10 young American airmen whose B17 Flying Fortress plane (named Mi Amigo), returning from a bombing raid, plunged into Endcliffe woodland rather than crash on the Endcliffe green or the crowded urban streets around Sharrow. A heroic story which has been honoured relatively discreetly every 22nd February with services at St Augustine's and by the Amigo memorial itself. But this year was different and the eyes of the world were focused on our park, and the city, all thanks to the power of the media to capture a unique story. A "GetTonyAFlypast"

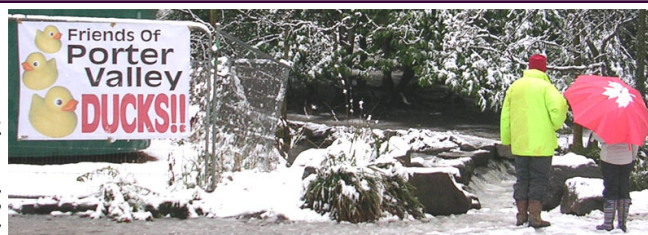
went viral after BBC Breakfast presenter Dan Walker spotted Mr Tony Foulds attending to the memorial. Tony's childhood memories of the crash touched hearts immediately. Dan's lively reporting resulted in a much larger 75 year commemoration than had been planned originally, crowned by the flypast of 10 vintage airplanes at breakfast time. Like the thousands of people in the park and on the hills and tall buildings all round the city, and the millions world wide, I witnessed them blast through the beautiful clear sky.

It was a real feat of organisation and collaboration. The BBC motivated British and American forces to organise the roaring blitz across the park of a Dakota, a CV-22 Osprey, a KC-135 Tanker, an MC130, an RAF Typhoon and four F-15E Strike Eagles...I hope I have that list correct! Some had come all the way from RAF Mildenhall, Lakenheath, and Coningsby. The families of the airmen, the BBC teams and representatives of the two governments and the armed forces were prominently there. Many crowded on the Endcliffe Park green were wearing family medals and WWII uniforms as a sign of respect. It was a brief but wonderful feel-good moment. And for those who spotted yellow viz jackets quietly labouring some days before on the access paths...yes, it was the FoPV conservation team hard at it improving the ground ready for the crowds!

Ann le Sage

Easter Monday Duck Race

It's that time of the year again when we launch 2,500 ducks into the river and watch them float gently, or as in last year's flood conditions, hurtle down to the finishing line just below the stepping stones. Last year, because of the very rapid flow following heavy snow the first 40 ducks, all bearing prizewinning numbers, crossed the line in just over 6 minutes. There was a little frantic action at the finish line as marshals struggled manfully (can we still say that?) to capture the vast flotilla of ducks which all arrived together. We have taken steps to improve our catching techniques and can only hope that this year the ducks will behave in a more orderly manner giving the children who line the river, helping the ducks on their journey, a longer time to enjoy the spectacle. So do come along for the 2pm launch and cheer your duck, costing £1 each or 6 for £5, on its way. There are valuable prizes to be won.



Chris Nicholson

The FoPV Registry

Since our last Newsletter we have set up of a Registry for members to report sightings they have made in the valley as the year progresses through the seasons. To date only a few members have sent in their sightings but those received at registry@fopv.org.uk are a useful and interesting start. Kingfishers were seen on Nether Spur and Shepherd Wheel Dams late January and early February, Curlews heard and seen further up the Clough in late February. Many Mandarins were seen throughout the valley, mating in early February, and a pair of Teal briefly visited Forge Dam. A first Chiff Chaff was heard in March followed by a single Redwing yet to migrate back to Scandinavia.

Observations of plants were very encouraging. In late February Pussy Willow, Golden Saxifrage, Dog's Mercury, Coltsfoot and Celandines were all seen. By mid-March several more plants were identified including Wood Anemone, Blackthorn, Wild Strawberry, Gorse, Hairy Bittercress, Vinca Minor, Spring Beauty and Pink Purslane - all seen in flower. An early Bumble Bee was spotted in the second week of February followed by a first Tortoiseshell butterfly a fortnight later. So send in your sightings to the registry and help build up a picture of nature in our Valley. We are now considering whether to enter our data into a national database named iRecord.

Chris Nicholson

Bingham Park

Improvements are continuing in Bingham Park. As I walked through the Park recently people were playing in the new tennis courts. When asked park users welcome the changes. Bingham Park Community Group (BPCG) working with Friends of Porter Valley (FoPV), Sheffield City Council (SCC) and Sheffield Parks have made considerable progress. BPCG have received funds from Henry Boot, Co-op, Ecclesall Road, Graves Trust, Ecclesall Ward pot, Sheffield Town Trust. This has enabled BPCG to have retaining walls repaired, a notice board provided and some other repairs. The next work starting soon (with the available funds) will be to tarmac the court area 1; this will enable children to ride bikes and scooters on a good surface.

Work mornings with volunteers from FoPV have also taken place clearing scrub and brambles, collecting litter. Volunteers from BPCG have also been active cleaning graffiti and some scrub clearing. Graffiti and litter are a real problem. I would hope people with an interest in the environment would remove litter and not daub graffiti in the area.

Sheffield Parks have provided two new Park Benches with amazing views over Ranmoor. The Bowling Green is protected with a new fence. Paths have been tarmacked and the landscaped area is looking green. The trees growing over the AstroTurf have been removed and Park Keepers have removed considerable amounts of fallen leaves. The AstroTurf is used for various games and soon will have the addition of Goal Posts. The World War 1 Memorial Oak has been planted and a plaque "Lest We Forget" installed.

The next stage is to improve court area 2 and 3, options include multi-use games areas. This will require considerable fund raising, 3 people have decided to join BPCG committee, we hope to meet soon and discuss future plans. To make this happen we also need the support of Greystones Community.

Glyn Mansell (BPCG committee)

Conservation Volunteers Brave the Winter

Well, we were prepared for the worst, but it has been a relatively mild winter. FOPV conservation volunteers were able to carry out some very productive and useful work with record numbers attending the work mornings. In January we finished our coppicing tasks at Common Lane Open Space at the Cottage Lane End and it now looks very neat and tidy. In 15-20 years time we can return to harvest the coppiced hazel!

In preparation for the Mi Amigo event Conservation Volunteers helped improve access to the memorial by helping to lay road planings provided by Amey on paths leading up to the memorial and cleared undergrowth and brash from the immediate vicinity.

Back at Forge Dam we will be spending a significant amount of time in the future now that planning permission for the restoration project has been granted.

In early March we cleared the willow from the island. This had grown very rapidly over the past year since last year's clearance there. We use willow to form the bases for the wreaths which we make at the Christmas Fair. By cutting the willow back new supple growth is this. It grows very rapidly and will be ready for the 2019 goit leading from Forge Dam became blocked and this during the last work morning in March. An underground and we eventually managed to clear it using a very long length of drain rods. Water is now flowing freely to Wire Mill Dam.

The next task will be to clear the river of debris in preparation for the Great Duck Race on 22nd April so that the racing ducks can safely compete for record times.

Dave Clegg



building it...



...using it!



willow clearing



coppicing

Secretary:
Glynis Jones
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S11 8RU

Tel 2668332
secretary@fopv.org.uk

Annual Membership:

Single: £10
Family: £15
Concession: £5

Membership forms
available from
David Young
(tel. 2307909)
or on our website

High Storrs ECO Fair

On 23 March we ran a stall at High Storrs Academy's very first ECO Fair. Ann Greenwood, Cheryl McCormick, Gina and Bob Hodges, Jan Baxter, Maggie Marsh and I sold ducks for the Forge Dam restoration. We had a lot of visitors taking away our literature and popping cash into the green bucket. It was a very useful awareness raising exercise, and we raised over £200 after taking costs into account, so not a bad day's work! There were lots of interesting speakers and other stalls; it was all under cover so we didn't have to worry about setting up awnings in a gale; there was reasonable food and drink provision on site; and other stalls had interesting craft items for sale making ideal presents. Altogether a very enjoyable day: the many FoPV members who came to chat to us found it to be a really interesting and different local weekend event, so watch out for the opportunity next year!

Ann le Sage

Ivy – A Fantastic Plant!

- ♣ It flowers in the autumn providing nectar for many insects including butterflies. In early spring its black berries are food for birds.
- ♣ A thick stand of ivy provides roosting and nesting sites for birds, and habitat for many invertebrates.
- ♣ Ivy is one of the food plants of the holly blue butterfly.

Recently someone has been cutting through ivy stems on trees near Forge Dam. Many people wrongly think that ivy harms the trees it grows up, but this isn't true. Usually ivy doesn't get enough light to grow up a tree unless that tree is already failing. Ivy can be a symptom of a sick tree, not the cause. So cutting back ivy isn't helping the trees, and it's harmful to many species of insects and birds. Instead of trying to kill ivy, we should enjoy it and all the wildlife it supports.



Activities for April to August

Any changes in the following details will be available on the web-site

When and Where	What and Who
Monday 22 nd April, 10am-4pm	<i>Great Easter Duck Race</i> Easter bonnet parade, activities, stalls, duck sales etc. Duck race starts at 2pm
Wednesday 1 st May, 7.30pm Bents Green Church Hall	<i>Early Sheffield Silversmiths</i> Open meeting and talk by Emma Paragreen
Saturday 4 th May, 4.30am Wire Mill Dam car park	<i>Dawn chorus</i> A walk led by Chris Nicholson
Thursday 9 th May, 10am-1pm Forge Dam	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Tuesday 28 th May, 10am-1pm tba	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 1 st June, 10am Wire Mill Dam car park	<i>Flowering Plants of central Porter Valley</i> A walk led by Ken Balkow
Thursday 13 th June, 10am-1pm tba	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Tuesday 25 th June, 10am-1pm tba	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 6 th July, 10am Forge Dam Café	<i>Invertebrates investigation for all the family</i> A walk led by Amanda Childs of Sparking STEM
Thursday 11 th July, 10am-1pm tba	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Tuesday 23 rd July, 10am-1pm tba	Conservation work morning. Contact Dave Clegg orielclegg@aol.com or fopv.org.uk for details
Saturday 3 rd August, 10am Endcliffe Park Hunter's Bar entrance	<i>The Porter Valley's Woodland Heritage</i> A walk led by Ruth Morgan

The Committee:

Ann le Sage
Chair
David Young
Treasurer
Glynis Jones
Secretary / newsletter
Dave Clegg
Conservation work days
Les Greenwood
Mike Halliwell
Website / membership
Glyn Mansell
Bingham Park
Maggie Marsh
Shepherd Wheel open days
Chris Nicholson
Walks
Flora Owen
Talks